

FFY 2015 State Plan - Attachment 4.8 (b) (2) – Coordination with Education Officials

DSHS/DVR updated its agreement with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in 2011 and will renew the agreement no later than October 1, 2014, for another three year period.

The agreement to reflect requirements of the Rehabilitation Act as well as the changes passed in amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and OSPI's most current approach to interagency agreements. It The agreement outlines each agency's overall role and responsibilities relating to the provision of transition services to high school students with disabilities. This agreement provides for the development and approval of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) before each student determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting. Under this agreement, DSHS/DVR routinely consults with and provides technical assistance to high schools and educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services. DSHS/DVR's agreement with OSPI also states that DSHS/DVR will coordinate services with students' Individualized Education Plans (IEP). The Interagency Agreement lays the groundwork for DSHS/DVR's roles and responsibilities.

DSHS/DVR's primary services while a student is in high school are outreach, information and referral, counseling and guidance to plan for post-school services and activities. DSHS/DVR authorizes and pays for any services needed to establish a transition student's eligibility for DSHS/DVR services and only funds services outside the scope of the school district's FAPE (free appropriate public education) responsibility.

The DSHS/DVR/OSPI agreement lists several procedures that are to be used to increase the number of students identified as needing transition services as well as ensuring that the services are provided as soon as possible. Some specific procedures include:

- An OSPI representative is a member of the State's Rehabilitation Council.
- Assigning a VR Counselor liaison to each high school.
- Sharing training materials developed by the agencies and extending invitations to trainings using these materials
- Providing DSHS/DVR outreach to increase education about DSHS/DVR services to underserved populations and students with disabilities.
- OSPI providing a link on their website to DSHS/DVR high school transition liaisons and informing LEAs of the list.

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- Inviting DSHS/DVR's statewide transition lead to participate in secondary transition planning meetings as appropriate to promote inter-agency collaboration.

~~Implementation of these elements of the agreement continues to be a "work in progress." Personnel changes and work rearrangements at OSPI have eroded DSHS/DVR's long term relationships with the state education agency. New linkages are in the process of being established to effectively carry out our working agreements. This continues to be a focus for 2014.~~

In addition, the agreement sets the expectation that DSHS/DVR will assign a VR Counselor as a liaison to every public and tribal high school in the state where there is staff capacity. A list of liaison assignments is available on several education-related web sites, as well as the DSHS/DVR and the OSPI web sites. DSHS/DVR transition liaison counselors conduct periodic outreach and ongoing consultation to teachers, students, families and others in the education community.

The DSHS/DVR Customer Services Manual provides guidance to the VR Counselor that the IPE is to be coordinated with the IEP and development of the IPE should begin, if feasible, prior to the student leaving the school setting.

The DSHS/DVR Area Managers have responsibility for working with counseling staff to ensure quality transition services are provided.

DSHS/DVR intends to continue carrying out the following new strategies to further improve coordination of education referrals, increase local community partnerships and to generally better serve transition youth:

- Assure that at least 90.0 percent of transition customers exit high school with an IPE developed and underway.
- Expand our School to Work contract to more counties to increase the support for significantly disabled transition aged youth also served by county developmental disability programs.
- Publish, and distribute a Youth Transition Handbook for those working with youth in transition from high school to life after high school.
- Train DSHS/DVR staff in how to use the Youth Transition Handbook to increase collaborative relationships with local school and partner personnel, including the referral of youth eligible for a Section 504 Plan.
- Further implement Transition Practical Guidance with supervisors to increase statewide consistency in DSHS/DVR provision of transition related services.
- Develop Inter-Local agreements with specific local school districts to better

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define the services and responsibilities that high schools and DSHS/DVR will respectively provide to jointly serve youth with disabilities as they transition into the world of work. These agreements will include steps to improve referral linkages for high school students with disabilities in both special education and regular education to enable them to apply for DSHS/DVR services before they graduate.

- Engage other partners, including the State Rehabilitation Council, the State Independent Living Council, Centers for Independent Living (CIL), ~~the Family Policy Council~~, DSHS partners and Workforce Development partners in designing an improved service delivery model. This model will develop stronger partnerships with Workforce Development Youth Councils, high schools, community colleges and other training and education programs.
- Collaborate more closely with Tribal VR Programs to better serve Tribal youth, including support for transition work in tribal schools. Publish and distribute the DSHS/DVR Guide for High School Transition Students and improve distribution of the DSHS/DVR High School Transition DVD.
- Assure that students, parents and school personnel receive DSHS/DVR informational material while the student is early into high school experience.
- Expand outreach to "Section 504" students.

DSHS/DVR also maintains a strong liaison relationship with the Center for Childhood Deafness & Hearing Loss to refer deaf and hard of hearing students to DSHS/DVR for services and the Washington School for the Deaf (WSD). Each fall the Statewide Coordinator of Deaf Services (SCD) contacts WSD for a list of junior and senior students and distributes this information to the students' hometown Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCD). The local RCD then assumes responsibility for arranging a meeting with the student to begin the application process. SCD follows up in the spring with WSD and the local RCDs to facilitate any additional transition needs. DSHS/DVR maintains a presence on the campus of WSD through participation in the annual transition fair and periodic communications by the SCD with WSD.

Additionally, DSHS/DVR continues to focus of its Title VII, Part B funding by contracting with five Centers for Independent Living throughout Washington State to enhance and expand core independent living services with a focus on youth with significant disabilities. In addition to core services, IL Centers have been focusing on outreach to increase services in unserved or underserved geographic areas including disability groups, minority groups and urban or rural populations with the focus on youth with significant disabilities and 504 plans. The goal is to create a safe environment for youth with disabilities to be able to feel comfortable and confident when talking to allies who support disabilities by enhancing youth in understanding IL philosophy, how to successfully self-advocate, and how to talk with legislators about disability issues.